



Aboriginal Language Areas in Victoria – a reconstruction

A Report to the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation For Languages

Prepared by:
Dr Ian D. Clark, School of Business

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1.0 Introduction

The Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages is the state body responsible for the retrieval, recording and restoration of Aboriginal languages in Victoria. It also assists local Aboriginal communities with language projects.

1.1 The Project

The project brief outlined four objectives of the Aboriginal Language Areas in Victoria project:

1. identify the language areas as they existed at the time of contact with Europeans;
2. identify, where possible, the dialects spoken within these language areas;
3. produce a brief, but informative, report on the findings;
4. produce a map of the language areas and dialects in Victoria at the time of contact.

This project was first undertaken in 1996. Since then more detailed research into eastern and northern Victoria has been undertaken and a revised map and updated report became necessary, hence this recommissioned project in 2005.

1.2 Nineteenth century efforts to delineate Victorian Aboriginal languages

The first concerted attempt to record information on the Aborigines of Victoria was conducted by officers of the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate which operated from 1839 until 1849. Under the leadership of the Chief Protector, George Augustus Robinson, Victoria (then known as Port Phillip) was divided into four districts assigned to four Assistant Protectors. As part of their duties, Assistant Protectors were to attach themselves as closely and as constantly as possible to the Aboriginal tribes in their districts; they were to learn the languages of these tribes and obtain accurate information on the number of Aborigines within their districts. The extensive manuscript materials generated by the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate, particularly the journals and papers of GA Robinson, are a primary source of information on Victorian languages and dialects.

In the 1870s the collection and collation of as much material as possible about the Aborigines became recognised as an obligation of scientific interest. This obligation was motivated by a sense of urgency - fuelled by misguided beliefs that Victorian Aboriginal culture was disappearing and that Aboriginal people would soon be extinct. In terms of this ethnographic material and its relevance to reconstructing Victorian Aboriginal languages, the works of Smyth (1878), Dawson (1881), Curr (1886), Howitt (1904), and the extensive papers and essays of Mathews, are the most relevant.



1.3 Tindale's delineation of Victorian Aboriginal languages

Norman Tindale's (1940, 1974) reconstructions of Australian Aboriginal languages constitutes the best-known, but now dated, maps of Victorian tribes. Tindale's reconstructions were part of a wider effort to delineate Aboriginal spatial organisation at a national level.

In southern Australia, Tindale was reliant on manuscript material and other primary material as he was only able to obtain information from a handful of community people. Given Tindale's reliance on archival material, the value of his reconstructions depend upon how well he used the materials available at the time of his research. The Robinson papers, for example, were not available until after Tindale had completed his first reconstruction in 1940, but this material was not consulted in his second reconstruction published in 1974.

The research of Hercus (1969; 1986), Barwick (1984), Clark (1990, 1996), and Wesson (1994, 2002), challenges Tindale's reconstruction of Victorian Aboriginal languages and exposes its inadequacies, errors and shortcomings. For example, Tindale's reconstruction of Victorian Aboriginal languages suffers from this selectivity and has many errors and deficiencies. The reconstruction that follows is based on this new research, as well as manuscript information gleaned from Protectorate records, and other material that was not used by Tindale.

1.4 Definition of terms

According to Dixon (1980) 'language' can be used in two quite different ways. Firstly, in everyday conversation people identify themselves as speakers of a particular language (here represented as language(1)), and make judgements as to whether their way of speaking is 'the same language(1)', or a different language(1) from another's speech. The second sense is the technical usage of linguists who regard two languages(1) as dialects of a single language (here represented as language(2)) if they are mutually intelligible. Thus a chain of mutually intelligible languages(1) constitute a language(2); where there need not be intelligibility between dialects at the extremes of the chain, but each individual language(1) in the continuum must be mutually intelligible with its nearest neighbour.

For Australia as a whole this means that the 600 or so Aboriginal tribes with their own language(1) spoke between them 200 different languages(2). Mathews (1898) was one of the first ethnographers concerned with language(2) groupings. He understood a language(2) in these terms: 'when several tribes are bound together by affinity of speech, have the same moiety names, and similar initiation ceremonies, they form communities, and aggregations of these communities may be designated 'nations' (Mathews 1898:325)'.



Dixon (1980) believes that even when dealing with southwest Victoria where only scanty written records are available, there is never any difficulty in deciding what was a language(2). As an example he cites the contiguous languages(1) Djabwurrung (at Ararat, Hamilton and Stawell), Djadjawurrung (at Maryborough) and Wathawurrung (at Beaufort, Ballarat and Geelong). Examination of vocabularies and grammars reveals that the first two were dialects of a single language(2), while the third belonged to a separate language(2). Dixon's rationale for subgrouping languages is that in situations where there is more than 70 percent common vocabulary between two languages(1) they are probably dialects of a single language(2); between 60 and 70 percent, the two are distinct but closely related, belonging to the same sub-group; but when the commonality is less than 40 percent the two are not closely related genetically.

Within a tribe each local group or clan, as a rule, spoke a slightly different dialect from each other local group within their language(1). Furthermore, between the level of the clan and the language(1)name, it is sometimes possible to find that clans formed an intermediate regional grouping that spoke a clearly named dialect. Where language(1) dialects are known, it is generally the case that the language(1) name will be the same as one of the dialect names. For example, in western Victoria the Djabwurrung language(1) comprised three dialects: Knenknenwurrung, Pirtpirtwurrung, and Djabwurrung.

1.5 Results of the Study

This reconstruction has found that 39 languages may have been spoken in the region now bounded by the state of Victoria. Of these 39 languages, five are predominantly South Australian or New South Wales languages. In addition, 19 sub-dialects have been identified in seven languages.



2.0 Inventory of Victorian Aboriginal Languages

2.1 About this inventory

This inventory is arranged alphabetically. Each entry includes a discussion of the language name and its meaning (where known), and considers dialects where known. Generally, the orthography followed is that favoured by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, any deviations from this orthography will be explained. Detailed linguistic analyses of each language, where they exist, will be referenced.

2.1.1 Barababaraba

Earliest reference to language name: 1843 (NSW 1843:44)

Meaning: derived from the distinctive word for 'no'.

Sub-dialects: none identified

Clark (1990) lists over 50 variants of the language name. It is possible to find three versions of the name: variants of the word for no, in a singular presentation, as in Baraba; variants reduplicated, as in Barababaraba, and variants in the form of Burabaraba. The Barababaraba language was practically identical with its neighbour Wembawemba (93 percent) and Hercus (1986, 1992) notes that when she was speaking with Wembawemba people in the 1960s, they often commented on the similarity between the two languages.

2.1.2 Bidawal

Earliest reference to language name: 1846 (Lingard 1846)

Meaning: bidawal means 'scrub dwellers'

Sub-dialects: none identified.

Generally, the people of this region are known as 'Bidawal' a likely derogatory description conferred on these people by their neighbours. Tindale (1974) has listed what he believes are variant names of Bidawal. These include *Maap* (meaning 'man'), *Muk-dhang* (meaning 'good speech'), and *Kwai-dhang* (meaning 'rough speech, and thus likely to be a pejorative name'). The Brabralung Ganai-speakers also called their language *Mukthang* 'excellent speech' (Howitt Papers n.d.). Of these variants, *Muk-dhang* and *Maap* are likely to be valid variant names. Tindale's reconstruction addresses the issue of the status of the long coastal strip of land east of the Snowy River attributed to Krauatungalung in Howitt (1904), but considered Bidawal by Jemmy Lawson (in Howitt Papers), and Wesson (2002). Like Fison and Howitt (1880), Tindale considered the western side of the Wingan River, and most of the Thurra, Cann, Bemm and Brodribb River catchments to be in Krauatungalung country. This spatial organization renders the Ben mitter (at Sydenham Inlet and Bemm River) and the Karn (at Cann River) as Krauatungalung. Tindale's

reconstructions also place the Mallakoterer mitter (east of Mallacoota Inlet), Tinnoor mittong (Genoa River) and Wongererbul (Genoa River near Wroxham) as Bidawal clans. This contradicts the information supplied by Rodney (in Robinson Journal) that they all spoke in the same, Cape Howe (Thawa) tongue. This study supports the conclusion of Fesl (1985) that the Bidawal were landlocked and did not have any coastline as a boundary. The justification for this view comes from linguistic analysis and scrutiny of the ethnohistoric sources on clan organization along the southeast coast.

2.1.3 Boonwurrung

Earliest reference to language name: 1836 (Stewart in Bonwick 1883; Langhorne in Gurner Papers; Wedge in Croll & Wettenhall 1937)

Meaning: According to Mathews (1903) the language name is derived from the word for 'no'.

Sub-dialects: none identified

Clark (1990) lists over 60 variants of the language name. I have followed Blake (1991) in representing Bunwurrung as Boonwurrung, using the double oo rather than u so that we stop mispronouncing the name. The Boonwurrung language shared 93 percent common vocabulary with Woiwurrung and 80 percent with Daungwurrung (see Blake 1991 for more information).

2.1.4 Brabralung

Earliest reference to language name: 1878 (Howitt in Smyth 1878)

Meaning: According to Howitt (1904), Brabralung is derived from 'bra', 'man', brabra may mean 'manly', '(g)alung' meaning 'of' or 'belonging to'.

Sub-dialects: none identified

One of five tribal groups, Brabralung, Braiakaulung, Brataulung, Krauatungalung, and Tatungalung, collectively known as 'Ganai' ('Kurnai' by nineteenth century and early twentieth century writers, especially Fison and Howitt, 1880).

2.1.5 Braiakaulung

Earliest reference to language name: 1880 (Howitt 1880)

Meaning: According to Howitt (1904), Braiakaulung is derived from 'bra' and 'yak' meaning 'west', and '(g)ulung' meaning 'of' or 'belonging to'; Tindale (1974) translates it 'men of the west'.

Sub-dialects: none identified

One of five dialects of Ganai, see entry for Brabralung.

2.1.6 Brataualung



Earliest reference to language name: 1880 (Howitt 1880)

Meaning: not known

Sub-dialects: none identified

One of five dialects of Ganai, see entry for Brabralung.

2.1.7 Dadidadi

Earliest reference to language name: 1846 (Robinson journal and report)

Meaning: derived from distinctive word for 'no'.

Sub-dialects: none identified

Clark (1990) lists 40 variants of the language name. According to Cameron (1885), the Dadidadi were also known as the 'Nimp-mam-wern', meaning 'light lip'. Hercus (1978) has suggested that Dadidadi was identical to the Narinari language spoken at Hay in New South Wales. Dadidadi and Jidajida shared 80 per cent common vocabulary (see Clark 1990). See Ladjiladji entry regarding locative issues.

2.1.8 Daungwurrung

Earliest reference to language name: 1837 (Langhorne in Gurner)

Meaning: derived from distinctive word for 'no'.

Sub-dialects: none identified

The language shared 83 percent common vocabulary with Woiwurrung; 80 percent with Boonwurrung; 44 percent with Wathawurrung; 40 percent with Djadjawurrung; 11 percent with Yortayorta; and 11 percent with the Kurnai dialects (see Blake 1991). Clark (1990) lists over 100 variants of the language name.

2.1.9 Dhauwurdwurrung

Earliest reference to language name: 1841 (Robinson journal and papers)

Meaning: unknown

Sub-dialects: Bi:gwurrung; Dhauwurdwurrung; Gaiwurrung; Gurngubanud; Wulluwurrung

This language and details of its dialects, is better known than any other Victorian language, largely due to the extensive vocabulary collected by James Dawson (1881) and the grammatical sketch of RH Mathews (1904). On the basis of four primary sources (Robinson Journal and Papers, Dawson 1881, Mathews 1904, and Mathew Papers) it is possible to identify five dialects:

1. Wulluwurrung



Earliest reference to dialect name: 1841 (Robinson journal and papers)

Meaning: unknown

For a list of 23 variants of this name see Clark 1990.

2. Dhauwurdwurrung

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1904 (Mathews 1904)

Meaning: unknown

Clark 1990 lists 17 variants.

3. Gaiwurrung

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1881 (Dawson 1881)

Meaning: 'Oh, dear! lip' (Dawson 1881)

Three variants listed in Clark (1990).

4. Gurngubanud

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1881 (Dawson 1881)

Meaning: a descriptive name meaning 'small lip' or 'short pronunciation'

Nine variants of name listed in Clark (1990).

5. Bi:gwurrung

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1881 (Dawson 1881)

Meaning: 'kelp lip', taken from the broad-leafed seaweed found in abundance along the Port Fairy seashore. Clark (1990) lists 12 variants.

Three language names are offered in the literature: Dhauwurdwurrung, Gurngubanud, and Gundidjmarra. Dhauwurdwurrung is the favoured language name as its usage was confirmed by John Mathew during a visit to Lake Condah Mission in 1907, when he was told by Peter Ewart, Ernest Mobourne, and James Courtwine, that Dhauwurdwurrung was the language in that region and that Giraiwurrung was the next eastern language (Mathew Papers). The status of the name 'Gundidjmarra' is discussed in Clark (1990).

Dhauwurdwurrung formed a dialect continuum (language2) with its eastern neighbours Giraiwurrung and Djargurdwurrung. For more discussion see Krishna-Pillay (1996).

2.1.10 Dhudhuroa

Earliest reference to language name: 1840 (Robinson journal)

Meaning: appears to consist of the first syllable of the word for 'no' reduplicated (Blake & Reid 2002: 179)

Sub-dialects: None identified

Earliest references are found in Robinson's papers. Variants include Do.dor.dee; Dodora; Dodoro; Toutourrite; Theddora-mittung; Dhudhuroa; Duduroa. Dhudhuroa is regarded by Howitt (1904) to be a Jaithmathang clan, but considered by Mathews, Tindale (1974), and Barwick (1984) to be a separate tribe. Lexicostatistical analysis by Blake and Reid (2002) suggests that Dhudhuroa did not share a close relationship with any neighbouring

language. This view is confirmed by Dixon (2002). Djilamatong, an obscure group, is assigned tribal status by Tindale (1974) and placed on the upper headwaters of the Murray River. Its status is problematical, and no clan information has been uncovered. The case for Djilamatong as a tribal/language group is very weak indeed, and in this reconstruction it is considered part of Dhudhuroa.

2.1.11 Djabwurrung

Earliest reference to language name: 1881 (Dawson 1881)

Meaning: ‘soft’ or ‘broad lip’ in contrast to other dialects of harder pronunciation (Dawson 1881)

Sub-dialects: Djabwurrung, Knenknenwurrung, Pirtpirtwurrung

In most sources of Djabwurrung vocabulary the general word for ‘Aborigines’ is kuli/guli, so this language may be placed in the language(2) continuum generally called ‘Kulin’ (see Clark 1990). Three dialects of Djabwurrung have been identified in the source material. Aboriginal Protectorate records and Dawson’s (1881) ethnography are the basic sources of information for these dialects.

1. Djabwurrung:

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1881 (Dawson 1881)

Meaning: meaning ‘soft’ or ‘broad lip’, in contrast to other dialects of harder pronunciation (Dawson 1881). Twenty seven variants are listed in Clark (1990).

2. Pirtpirtwurrung:

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1881 (Dawson 1881)

Meaning: ‘jump lip’ (Dawson 1881)

Dawson (1881) noted that the Pirtpirtwurrung dialect differed very slightly from Djabwurrung. Clark (1990) lists three variants of this dialect name.

3. Knenknenwurrung:

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1840 (Parker 1840 in Clark 1990:107)

Meaning: either ‘active’ or ‘quick lip’, or ‘no-lip’ from ‘kne kne’ their word for no (Parker 1840). Thirty seven variants listed in Clark (1990).

On the basis that Dawson identified Djabwurrung as one of four primary languages spoken in western Victoria, we can regard the Djabwurrung dialect name as the probable language name. The Djabwurrung language shared 80 percent common vocabulary with Djadjawurrung, 70 percent with Wergaia and Wembawemba, 48 percent with Dhauwurdwurrung and 42 percent with Buandig.

2.1.12 Djadjawurrung

Earliest reference to language name: 1839 (Parker to Robinson 1839 see Clark 1990)

Meaning: We cannot be conclusive about the meaning of the stem 'djadja', however information from ES Parker and his son, JS Parker, suggests the language name is derived from the word for 'yes' (in Smyth 1878). An alternative language name, Lewurrung, is derived from the word for 'no' (see Clark 1990).

Sub-dialects: none identified.

Clark (1990) lists over 100 variants from 65 distinct sources. Yarra-yowurru, which applied to two northern clans, is considered a variant of Djadjawurrung in the early writings of ES Parker. Dixon's (working Papers) analysis of this language revealed that it shared 80 percent common vocabulary with Djabwurrung; 64 percent with Barababaraba; 46 percent with Dhauwurdwurrung and 48 percent with Wathawurrung.

2.1.13 Djargurdwurrung

Earliest reference to language name: 1839 (Robinson Jnl 1839)

Meaning: not known

Sub-dialects: none identified

Forty variants are listed in Clark (1990). Dawson (1881) provided the language name 'Warn talliin', meaning 'rough language', however this is more likely to be the name conferred on the Djargurdwurrung by the Wathawurrung, as it is a pejorative and derogatory label. This group was considered by Tindale (1974) to be a Giraiwurrung clan. Dixon's analysis suggests this language differed considerably from Wathawurrung. It shared 80-90 percent common vocabulary with Giraiwurrung and Dhauwurdwurrung, and these three languages formed part of the language(2) continuum distinguished by a common word for people 'maar' or 'mara'.

2.1.14 Gadubanud

Earliest reference to language name: 1881 (Dawson 1881)

Meaning: 'King parrot language' (Dawson 1881)

Sub-dialects: none identified

Ethnohistoric and linguistic information on the people of the Cape Otway Ranges is very thin. A connection with the Gulidjan to their north is suggested in the literature.

2.1.15 Giraiwurrung

Earliest reference to language name: 1881 (Dawson 1881)

Meaning: 'blood lip' (Dawson 1881)

Sub-dialects: Giraiwurrung; Wirngilgnad-dhalinanong

Very little is known about this language and its two dialects. The only vocabulary known to exist is a 'Mortlake vocabulary' provided by a Miss Hood from Merrang containing 185 words and published in Mathew (1899). Hood's vocabulary has 87 percent common vocabulary with the standard Dhauwurdwurrung - Djargurdwurrung lexicon, and on this basis can be regarded as part of this language continuum. For more information see Krishna-Pillay's (1996) analysis. The language is known to have two dialects:

1. Giraiwurrung:

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1881 (Dawson 1881)

Meaning: meaning 'blood lip' (see Clark 1990). Eighteen variants listed in Clark (1990). Dawson notes that a nick name for this dialect was 'Ngutuk' based on the pronoun 'you'.

2. Wirngilgnad-dhalinanong:

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1881 (Dawson 1881)

Meaning: 'bear language', a reference to the concentration of koalas in this forested region (Dawson 1881).

2.1.16 Gulidjan

Earliest reference to language name: 1839 (see Clark 1990)

Meaning: unknown

Sub-dialects: none identified

Over 50 variants are listed in Clark (1990). The earliest sources favoured Gulidjan or a variant; whereas Dawson (1881) favoured 'Kolakgnat' meaning 'belonging to sand'. Data on this language are very scanty, but sufficient to confirm that it constituted a separate language with a small number of speakers occupying the country around Lake Colac. Dixon's (Working Papers) analysis suggests Gulidjan is a 'buffer', or 'mixed language', or 'creole', having something in common with each of its neighbours, yet is quite a distinct language. He suggests that at the time of European contact, the language may have been in the process of being assimilated to its neighbours and losing its original characteristics. For more information see Blake's, Reid's and Clark's (1998) analysis.

2.1.17 Gundungerre (Jaithmathang)

Earliest reference to language name: Gundungerre: 1835 (Lhotsky 1835);

Jaithmathang: 1844 (Robinson Jnl & Papers)

Meaning: unknown

Sub-dialects: none identified

Jaithmathang is considered by Bannister (1976) to be one of the most enigmatic language groups in Victoria. The name is sourced from Robinson's papers, and his references tend to suggest that Jaithmathang is a clan name,

rather than a language name. There are four 'Omeo' vocabularies, three sourced from Robinson (see Clark (2000d: 104; 2000h: 199-204, 326-7), and one from Bulmer (Curr 1887 Vol. 3: 558-9). Linguistic comparison and survey of the literature lends weight to the view that the Omeo Aboriginal people did not speak Dhudhuroa, and either spoke Ngarigu, or a dialect of Ngarigu. Their 'Ngarigu-ness' is confirmed by their use of *gungala*, the Ngarigu word for 'wild blackfellow'. Given the Ngarigu reference to a *Kundung-orur* language (in Howitt's papers), it is here argued that this is more likely to be the language name of the Omeo people. Until further research is undertaken, the label Gundungerre will be used to refer to the Omeo language area (Blake and Reid 2002: 183).

2.1.18 Jardwadjali

Earliest reference to language name: 1843 (Parker in NSW 1843)

Meaning: derived from distinctive word for 'no'; -djali is a regional equivalent of -wurrung.

Sub-dialects: Jagwadjali; Jardwadjali; Mardidjali; Nundadjali

Four dialects have been identified (for more information see Clark 1990):

1. Nundadjali:

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1845 (Parker 1845 in VPRS 12).

Meaning: presumably meaning 'good speech' (Tindale 1974), a southern dialect spoken along the upper Glenelg River. Five variants are listed in Clark (1990). Dixon's analysis is that it is an 'in-between' dialect belonging with the 'Western Kulin' continuum and not with Buandig as delineated by Tindale (1940, 1974). Howitt's (1880, 1904) 'Mukjarawaint' and Curr's (1887) 'Brapkut' appear to be variants of Nundadjali.

2. Jardwadjali:

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1843 (Parker in NSW 1843)

Meaning: 'no-tongue' derived from their distinctive word for 'no'; spoken about Horsham. Clark (1990) lists 12 variants.

3. Jagwadjali:

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1901-1904 (Mathews Notebooks)

Meaning: unknown, dialect spoken in the northeast about Lake Buloke.

4. Mardidjali:

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1940 (Tindale 1940)

Meaning: 'abrupt' or 'hard to understand speech', and this name would appear to be conferred by western neighbours. What Mardidjali clans preferred to call their own dialect is not known.

Dixon's analysis of Jardwadjali vocabulary suggests that it shared 90 percent common vocabulary with Djabwurrung, enabling him to state that there 'is no



difference linguistically' within the areas covered by Jardwadjali and Djabwurrung.

2.1.19 Jarijari

Earliest reference to language name: 1859 (Beveridge in Victoria 1859)

Meaning: derived from distinctive word for 'no'

Sub-dialects: none identified

Clark (1990) lists over 20 variants. See Ladjiladji entry regarding locative issues. Attribution of the Sunset Country in northwest Victoria is problematical, however on the basis of Howitt's (1904) reference that the people of this country were alien to the Wotjobaluk, it has been attributed to Jarijari.

2.1.20 Krauatungalung

Earliest reference to language name: 1880 (Howitt 1880)

Meaning: According to Howitt (1904), Krauatungalung is derived from 'Krauat' meaning 'east', and 'galung' meaning 'of' or 'belonging to'.

Sub-dialects: none identified.

One of five Ganai dialects, see entry for Brabralung.

2.1.21 Ladjiladji

Earliest reference to language name: 1848 (Hobler Diary 31/4/1848)

Meaning: derived from distinctive word for 'no'

Sub-dialects: none identified

Clark (1990) lists over 40 variant spellings. According to Blakes's and Reid's (1998) analysis, this language shared 81 percent common vocabulary with Madimadi; 83 percent with Wadiwadi; 77 percent with Wergaia; 72 percent with Wembawemba/ Barababaraba; and 57 percent with Dadjawurrung. Linguistic analysis by Hercus (1989) confirmed that the three interrelated languages: Ladjiladji, Madimadi, and Wadiwadi formed a kulinic subgroup on the basis of essential differences from other kulinic languages – these being that they have the suffix *-i* following nominal bases that end in a consonant, and a suffix *-ngi* following nominals that end in vowels. Tindale (1940, 1974) argued that Smyth (1878) had made a cartographic error and had transposed Ladjiladji with Dadidadi. If Smyth's map is reconsidered in the light of the evidential record, it is clear that he has made a fundamental cartographic error and the three groups 'Darty-darty', 'Yairy-yairy', and 'Litchy-litchy' are misplaced. Smyth has them in the order, going upstream, Darty-darty, Yairy-yairy, and Litchy-litchy. Tindale did not recognise the extent of Smyth's error. The correct order, upstream, is Yairy-yairy, Litchy-litchy, and Darty-darty.



2.1.22 Mogullumbidj

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1840 (Robinson Journal)

Meaning: descriptive name referring to appearance (see below)

Sub-dialects: none identified

Primary references span from 1840 to 1904 (Robinson *passim*, Thomas Papers; Smyth 1878; Howitt 1904). Howitt considered they formed the eastern most dialect of the Kulin speaking tribes. Their Kulin connection is confirmed by their visit to Melbourne in the early 1840s to participate in a *gaggip* (friendship ceremony) at the confluence of the Merri Creek and Yarra River. Mogullumbidj is not a language name, a sub-dialect name, or a clan name, rather it is a descriptive name, a term describing something distinctive about these peoples – in this case their appearance, the pigmentation of their skin (see Clark 2000b: 138, 318; 2000g: 94; Smyth 1878 vol.2: 157). The other name recorded for these people is Goo-goo-tum-bar, which may be a Yortayorta name for these people. Wesson (2000) is right to delineate this portion as ‘unnamed Kulin dialect’, however, in the absence of a language name, ‘Mogullumbidj’ should be retained, but as a descriptive reference.

2.1.23 Ngarigu

Earliest reference to language name: possibly Howitt (1880)

Meaning: not known

Sub-dialects: ‘southern Ngarigu’

Language spoken on the Southern Monaro from Bombala to Nimmitabel and along the upper Snowy Valley in the Delegate area, and around Goongerah in Victoria (Hercus 1986). Hercus (1986) has listed sources of vocabularies and her analysis suggests that Ngarigu was closely related to Ngunawal, spoken to the north in the Tumut, Canberra and Yass districts. In compiling her Southern Ngarigu vocabulary, Luise Hercus (1969, 1986) drew both from the published and unpublished record of prior linguists and ethnographers, as well as from interviews conducted by herself of people who had come from the Delegate region. She found the language recorded represented a southern form of Ngarigu, and not the ‘Biduelli’ recorded by Howitt (Papers n.d.) and Mathews (1907).

2.1.24 Ngurai-illamwurrung

Earliest reference to language name: 1840 (Robinson Journal)

Meaning: uncertain, -illam is likely to mean ‘bark’, ‘hut’, or ‘camp’ (see Clark 1990)

Sub-dialects: none identified

Clark (1990) lists over 40 variants of this name. Three clans spoke this language, which formed a dialect continuum with Daungwurrung, Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung. Blake (1991) is unsure if Ngurai-illamwurrung constituted



a separate wurrung, and suggests that the dialect name may be an alternative to Daungwurrung. Further research on this language area is needed to resolve this uncertainty. For more information see Barwick (1984), Clark (1990) and Blake (1991).

2.1.25 Tatungalung

Earliest reference to language name: 1878 (Howitt in Smyth 1878)

Meaning: According to Howitt (1904), Tatungalung is derived from 'Tat' meaning the sea, also the south, and 'galung' meaning 'of', or 'belonging to'.

Sub-dialects: none identified

One of five Ganai dialects, see entry for Brabralung.

2.1.26 Wadiwadi

Earliest reference to language name: 1846 (Robinson Journal and Report)

Meaning: derived from distinctive word for 'no'.

Sub-dialects: possibly, Wekiweki (see entry below)

Clark (1990) lists over 40 variants of the language name. Dixon (Working Papers) has suggested that this language was divided into two dialects, which he has arbitrarily named 'Piangil' (see Wekiweki, below) and 'non-Piangil' i.e. Wadiwadi.

2.1.27 Wathawurrung

Earliest reference to language name: 1836 (Langhorne in Gurner papers)

Meaning: derived from distinctive word for 'no'

Sub-dialects: none identified

Clark (1990) lists over 130 variants of this language name. Linguistically Wathawurrung was closest to its northern (Djadjawurrung) and eastern (Woiwurrung, Boonwurrung, Daungwurrung) neighbours. Grammatically it was considerably different from its western neighbours, sharing 50 percent common vocabulary with Gulidjan; 28 percent with Dhauwurdwurrung; and 48 percent with Djabwurrung. Dixon concluded that although Wathawurrung appeared to be genetically related to Daungwurrung, Boonwurrung, Woiwurrung, Djabwurrung, Djadjawurrung, and other 'Kulin' dialects, it may have diverged enough to be regarded as a separate language(2). Blake, Clark, and Krishna-Pillay (1998) have published the most detailed analysis of this language.



2.1.28 Waywurru (Pallanganmiddang)

Earliest reference to language name: 1840 (Robinson Journal)

Meaning: unknown

Sub-dialects: Minjambuta

Clark (1993) lists nine variants of the name Waywurru. Blake and Reid (1999) have presented the most detailed analysis of the language materials relevant to this area. The resolution of this report is to consider Waywurru a language name (see Bowe 2002: 143), Minjambuta to be a probable dialect name, and Pallanganmiddang to be a clan name and possibly an alternative language name.

Minjambuta/Minubuddong

'Minubuddong' is only found in the 1844 vocabulary papers of Robinson (Clark 2000g: 187) and the label 'Minjambuta' is only found in the writing of RH Mathews (1909). Lexicostatistical analysis by Blake and Reid (1999) of the vocabulary ascribed to this language has shown that when it is compared to neighbouring languages the scores are very low. For example, with the Yortayorta it is 12 per cent, and 15 per cent with the Dhudhuroa. Clearly, then, this vocabulary is not a dialect of Dhudhuroa or Yortayorta.

Pallanganmiddang

Primary references range from 1840 to 1904 (Robinson *passim*; Smyth 1878; Curr 1886; Howitt 1904). Variant names take two forms: one that uses the Kulin suffix *-yallum/-illum*, and the other the non-Kulin equivalent *-mittlung/-middang*. This does not imply the existence of two groups rather than from a Kulin point of view these people are Pallangoyallum, whereas from their own point of view they are Pallanganmiddang. The other fact that confirms that these variants refer to the same group is the reason that they refer to the same named individuals and are all associated with the same location: Bontherambo Plains, Wangaratta. The unity of this group is supported by Barwick (1984), Clark (1993), Blake and Reid (1999: 16), and Bowe (2002: 136).

Howitt (1904: 71) identified this group as part of the Kulin confederacy. Barwick (1984, Mss) and Clark (1993, 1996a, b) have reconstructed Pallanganmiddang as a local group (clan) within the Waywurru language area. Yet, Dixon (1980; 2002), and Blake and Reid (1999) have determined Pallanganmiddang to be a language name, despite the weight of the primary references that indicates that Pallanganmiddang is a clan name.

Blake's and Reid's (1999) analysis of the linguistic records is that they are meagre: 341 words are sourced from Robinson; 46 in Smyth (1878) 109 in Curr (1886-7); and 63 in Murdock (1900). Their lexicostatistic examination of these sources has revealed that these words share only 25 per cent

comparison with the Yortayorta, 21 per cent with Dhudhuroa, and 16 per cent with Wiradjuri, thus their conclusion that 'it seems likely therefore that Pallanganmiddang represents a language quite distinct from those of its neighbours (Blake & Reid 1999: 17). This conclusion reached by modern linguistic analysis is supported by Curr (1965: 246-7) who recalled that 'the Bangerang-speaking septs' were 'surrounded by a number of tribes which looked on them as foreigners, and hated them in common; spoke a different language from theirs'. It is also supported by Robinson's 1844 reference that these peoples' language was different to Wiradjuri. These 341 words belong to a language completely different to the languages surrounding it.

Waywurru

This name is found in three distinct sources: the journal of Chief Protector Robinson (1840, 1841, 1842, 1844); evidence tendered by local squatter Benjamin Barber (1841); and in the correspondence and returns from Local Guardian David Reid at Barnawatha (Victoria 1860, 1861). The linguistic analysis of the vocabularies recorded at Wangaratta and Yackandandah has shown that they are not comparable to Yortayorta (see Blake and Reid 1999).

2.1.29 Wekiweki

Earliest reference to language name: 1859 (Beveridge in Victoria 1859)

Meaning: presumably derived from distinctive word for 'no'

Sub-dialects: none identified

This group is first recorded in the work of Beveridge (1865, 1884, in Victoria 1859), Smyth (1878 – derived from Beveridge), Mathew (papers), and Howitt (1904; papers). Beveridge recorded 'Waiky Waiky', and Mathews recorded Werka Werka tjali; Warka tjali; and Weika tjali. Locative references include 'about Piangil' (Howitt 1904), 'Piangil to Euston' (Howitt Papers), and 'about 30 ml below Swan Hill at Noorung' (Mathew Papers). Clark (1990, 1996), considered this name to be a variant of Wergaia, reduplicated, because there was no information concerning clan organization or linguistic information available at that time to support a separate identity. Recent work by Blake and Reid (1998) suggests the Piangil dialect was slightly different from Wadiwadi, and this may support the integrity of Wekiweki as a language1 group. This is also confirmed by notes in John Mathew's papers (Ms 950 (f) (1)), 'Waki Waki lang that spoken by Isaac McDuff about 30 ml below Swan Hill at Noorung', a reference to Narung, which is consistent with Smyth's reconstruction from information supplied by Beveridge.

2.1.30 Wembawemba

Earliest reference to language name: 1854 (Parker 1854)

Meaning: derived from distinctive word for 'no'

Sub-dialect: Burabura

Clark (1990) lists over 20 variant spellings. It is possible to find variants in a singular representation, as in Wemba or Wamba, reduplicated, as in Wembawemba or Wambawamba, and occasionally singular and reduplicated spelt with a 'y', as in Yamba and Yambayamba. See Hercus (1986; 1992) for detailed analyses of this language. Dixon's analysis has shown that Wembawemba shared 93 percent common vocabulary with Barababaraba. Blake's and Reid's (1998) analysis is that it shared 86 percent with Wergaia; 75 percent with Wadiwadi; 70 percent with Madimadi; 82 percent with Djabwurrung; 72 percent with Ladjiladji; and 72 percent with Djadjawurrung.

Status of Burabura

Burabura is recorded by five separate sources (Beveridge 1865, 1884, in Victoria 1859; Smyth 1878; Howitt 1904, Papers; Mathew Papers; Stone 1911). Locative information includes 'Swan Hill' (Beveridge 1865, 1884, in Victoria 1859; Mathew Papers); 'From Swan Hill to the junction of the Loddon with the Murray River' (Howitt 1904); 'Reedy Lake'; 'The Boora-boora and Wattiwatti boundary outbound is the Tyrell Creek and Lake Tyrell' (Howitt Papers); 'Tyntynder-Swan Hill' (Stone 1911). Benjamin Lanky Manton is recorded by John Mathew as 'belonging to Swan Hill' and 'his lang was called purabura lang = no. His mother's lang was puraba puraba at Morga on the Edward R'. Dixon's assessment of the 'Burabura language' notes in Mathews notebook is that it is T5 Wemba (A), by which he means Wembawemba/Barababaraba. Hercus (1992) has considered the evidence for a distinction between an eastern and a western form of Wembawemba. The eastern form of speech shared some minor features with the neighbouring languages to the east, Perapaperapa; the western form of speech shared some minor features with the neighbouring language to the west, Watiwati. A fundamental question here is whether the name is a dialect/tribal name and/or a placename and a pastoral run name. Bura-bura is a placename on maps from the late 1840s onwards, and always refers to the same location, the run of the same name below Piangil. Clark (1990, 1996) considered Burabura to be a variant of Barababaraba that is found in the literature in a form Burabaraba. However, after having reconsidered the evidence, there does seem to be some weight for the separate existence of a Burabura group, especially the linguistic evidence raised by Hercus for an eastern and western form of Wembawemba. It is curious that the locative data in Howitt and elsewhere for a location from Swan Hill to the junction of the Loddon River with the Murray River bear no relation to the Burabura placename or the station name, which falls within Wekiweki. The status of Burabura requires more consideration.

2.1.31 Wergaia

Earliest reference to language name: 1902 (Mathews 1902)

Meaning: derived from distinctive word for 'no'.

Sub-dialects: Bewadjali; Buibadjali; Djadjala; Wudjubalug



Tindale's reconstruction of this language area is very inadequate. He divides the area into two tribes: Wotjobalek, and Jupagalk. Jupagalk is in fact a reference to the Jupagalk gundidj, a Wergaia clan belonging to Jupagalk, a camping place on the Avoca River. Four dialects have been identified in this language area:

1. Wudjubaluk/Wotjobaluk:

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1885 (Howitt 1885)

Meaning: wudju meaning 'man', baluk meaning 'people'

An eastern dialect of Wergaia, spoken between Boorong and Morton Plain (see Clark 1990). Clark (1990) lists 25 variants.

2. Dadjala:

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1902 (Mathews 1902)

Meaning: not known

Dialect spoken at lakes Werringren and Albacutya (see Clark 1990); Clark (1990) lists 12 variants.

3. Buibadjali:

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1902 (Mathews 1902)

Meaning: from buiba meaning 'no'.

Dialect spoken at Hopetoun (see Clark 1990); three variants are listed in Clark (1990).

4. Bewadjali:

Earliest reference to dialect name: 1866 (see Clark 1990:336)

Meaning: from bewa meaning 'no'

Dialect spoken at Lake Hindmarsh (see Clark 1990); three variants are listed in Clark (1990).

Dixon's analysis of this language has shown that it shared 90 percent common vocabulary with Wembawemba and Barababaraba; 70 percent with Jardwadjali and Djabwurrung; 83 percent with Ladjiladji; 82 percent with Madimadi; and 78 percent with Wadiwadi. See Hercus (1986) for a detailed discussion of this language.

2.1.32 Woiwurrung

Earliest reference to language name: 1836 (Langhorne in Gurner Papers)

Meaning: presumably derived from distinctive word for 'no'

Sub-dialects: none identified

Over 50 variants are listed in Clark (1990). Blake (1991) provides the most extensive discussion of this language. Woiwurrung formed a dialect continuum with Boonwurrung, with which it shared 93 percent common vocabulary, and with Daungwurrung (83 percent common vocabulary); it shared the following vocabulary with other neighbouring languages:



Djadjawurrung (45 percent), Djabwurrung (46 percent) and Wembawemba (37 percent).

2.1.33 Yortayorta (Bangarang)

Earliest reference to language name: 1842 (Robinson Journal re Yortayorta); 1839 (Robinson Journal re Bangarang)

Meaning: derived from distinctive word for 'no'

Sub-dialects: none identified.

According to Dixon's (Working Papers) analysis of the available data, the group of contiguous clans that were called 'Bangarang', called their language 'Yortayorta' or some variant. Tindale set up two separate tribes and subsequently has misled many researchers. Indeed, one easy way to confirm this is to note that many Bangarang sources record 'yorta' as the word for 'no' (see Bowe *et al* 1997). Bowe and Morey (1999) have published the most detailed analysis of this language. Dixon (Working Papers) found Yortayorta to be a fairly isolated language having similarities only with its northeastern neighbour, Jabulajabula. It is totally different from the 'Kulin' languages to its south; all aspects of its grammar being radically different. Clark (1990) lists 20 variant spellings of the language name. Kwart Kwart is a variant of Yorta yorta, a view supported by Bowe and Morey (1999). The Wiradjuri called the Bangarang 'Unungung' (see Robinson 25/4/1840 in Clark 2000a: 235; 239; Barber in 1841 in NSW 1839-42: 39), meaning 'reed blacks' (Robinson 1/5/1846 in Clark 2000e: 31). Another problematical name recorded in this region, 'Nat.po.bo' (Robinson 1843 in Clark 2000a: 122) may be the Bangarang name for the Barababaraba. Reanalysis has shown that Tindale's (1940; 1974) location of the Bangarang west to the Ovens River was grounded in the primary sources. The records from the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate and from local squatter EM Curr clearly situate them as far east as Yarrowonga and the confluence of the Ovens and Murray rivers, then to Toolamba.

2.1.34 Yuyu (Ngindadj)

Earliest reference to language name: 1879 (Shaw in Taplin 1879)

Meaning: not known, but presumably based on its distinctive word for 'no'

Sub-dialects: none identified

The language spoken at Ned's Corner, generally assigned to the 'Ngindadj' tribe. Dixon is unsure if this tribal name has any validity, and is certain that the language spoken in this area was called Yuyu or Juju, on the basis of information supplied by Shaw (in Taplin 1879:28-29) who noted that his informant was a member of the Rankbirit tribe and that they called their language 'You-You'. Ngindadj may be a variant tribal name. The precise location of the eastern boundary within the Ned's Corner pastoral run is unclear.



2.2 Marginal Language Groups in Victoria

The following five languages are predominantly South Australian or New South Wales Aboriginal languages, and are included in this report because small portions of their countries fall within Victoria.

2.2.1 Bindjali

Earliest reference to language name: 1900-1904 (Mathews Notebook see Clark 1990)

Meaning: unknown

Sub-dialects: Weregadjali

According to Dixon (Working Papers) this is an obscure language. Two vocabularies considered by Tindale (1974) to belong to this language, Dixon has assigned to other languages: Lawson in Taplin (1879) which Dixon considers is Buandig; and Haynes (in Curr 1887) which Dixon assigns to Wergaia. This language would appear to have three alternative names: Bodaruwutj (Potaruwutj); Weregadjali; and Bindjali. Bodaruwudj means 'wandering or travelling people' and is likely to be a pejorative descriptive name conferred on the Bindjali people by western neighbours because they were constantly shifting camp in the mallee country. Weregadjali, meaning 'no-lip', is, presumably, a dialect of Bindjali. Weregadjali is confirmed by Crouch (n.d.), Haynes (in Curr 1887), and Mathews (1904). Dixon comments that on the basis of these fragments, this language belongs to the western Kulin language(2) continuum.

2.2.2 Buandig

Earliest reference to language name: 1853-54 (Stewart 1853-54)

Meaning: not known

Sub-dialects: none identified

The earliest reference to this language name is in DS Stewart's 1853-54 notebook where he records 'Buandic'. In 1907, Dhauwurdwurrung speakers at Lake Condah Mission told John Mathew that they pronounced this language name as 'Buganditch' or 'Booganitch' (Mathew Papers).

2.2.3 Jabulajabula

Earliest reference to language name: 1898 (Baeyertz 1898)

Meaning: derived from distinctive word for 'no'

Sub-dialects: none identified

Clark (1990) lists 15 variant spellings. According to Dixon (Working Papers), this language differed from all of its neighbours excepting Yortayorta. Despite the fact that Curr and Mathews regarded Yortayorta and Jabulajabula as dialects of the same language, Dixon has found that they only shared 44

percent common vocabulary, and possessed different case inflections and verbs. Given the available data, he considers it unlikely that we will ever be able to decide between a) a close genetic relationship between Jabulajabula and Yortayorta, and b) a long period of contiguity, which built up vocabulary to an equilibrium figure leading to similar pronouns, but not verb and noun morphology. For a detailed analysis of this language see Bowe and Morey (1999).

2.2.4 Ngargad

Earliest reference to language name: 1845 (Eyre 1845)

Meaning: not known

Sub-dialects: none identified

Dixon's position is that it is not possible to allocate any vocabularies to Ngargad, as the vocabularies that are purported to belong to Ngargad are, according to Dixon, either Wergaia or Buandig. Ngalundji may be an alternative language name.

2.2.5 Thawa

Earliest reference to language name: presumably Howitt (1885)

Meaning: not known

Sub-dialects: none identified

Sources of language vocabulary for the study area include a *Cape Howe* and *Twofold Bay* language word list recorded by Robinson (in Clark 2000b), on his journey to Monaro Twofold Bay and east Gippsland in the winter of 1844. He also collected 26 words of the language of the *Mallogottor mittong* clan, which are approximately 75 percent cognate with his vocabulary lists for Cape Howe. These word lists all represent the Thawa language of the Cape Howe and Twofold Bay region of New South Wales, and not the *Muk-thang* of Mathews (1907) or Jongai Jemmy (in Howitt Papers n.d.).

2.3 Names requiring further consideration

2.3.1 Kianikiani

Earliest reference to name: 1846 (Robinson Jnl 1846)

Meaning: presumably, derived from distinctive word for 'no'

Sub-dialects: none identified

This group was first recorded by Robinson in 1846, and its name was not recorded again until James recorded and mapped it in 1897. RH Mathews provided some additional information in 1898. Robinson placed this group at two locations: at the junction of the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers, and between the Wakool and Edward rivers. The second location accords with James's location (James 27/9/1897 in Mathews Papers Ms 8006). This also



accords with information given by Old Bradshaw to John Mathew (see Papers) who placed them at Pericoota. It is curious that Gianigiani was not recorded by Beveridge or Howitt, however it is possible that if its location was entirely in New South Wales, that it would not have been included in Victorian-centric discussions of spatial organization. Gianigiani is possibly a third dialect in the Wadiwadi cluster.



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